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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 001066

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TAGS: [PROP](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [CH](#)
SUBJECT: GLOBAL TIMES LAUNCHES ENGLISH-LANGUAGE EDITION,
DENOUNCES OVERSEAS ANTI-CHINA BIAS IN A WHOLE NEW LANGUAGE

REF: BEIJING 905

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor
Aubrey Carlson. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

¶1. (SBU) People's Daily President Zhang Yannong presided over the official launch of the Global Times English-language edition at an April 20 reception in Beijing. At the event, People's Daily and Global Times editors told us the new English-language publication would maintain the "patriotic" editorial line of its successful Chinese edition, though it would not shy away from reporting both "good and bad" news about China. According to the inaugural editorial, the paper, which will compete head on with the government-published China Daily, aspires to "deliver China's voice to the world." Judging by the inaugural April 20 edition, the English-language version is staying true to the Global Times' propagandistic tradition of "exposing Western anti-China bias" even where it does not exist. End Summary.

"COMPLETE AND TRUE PICTURE OF CHINA"

¶2. (SBU) The Global Times, a newspaper published by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) flagship People's Daily, launched its English-language edition April 20 with a glitzy reception hosted by People's Daily President Zhang Yannong. The new edition's masthead slogan, "Discover China, Discover the World," expresses the paper's ambition, stated in its inaugural editorial, to be "one more channel (for China) to deliver its voice to the world...(W)e strive to reveal a complete and true picture of China. We are dedicated to conveying the original voices of the Chinese people."

¶3. (SBU) Global Times and People's Daily editors who spoke to PolOff during the reception said the Global Times English-language edition would be an outspoken and interesting alternative to the staid China Daily (which, prior to April 20, was China's only nationally circulated English-language newspaper). (Note: The Global Times' Chinese-language edition is one of China's most commercially successful tabloids thanks, in part, to its often jingoistic slant. A Hong Kong journalist recently told us that Global Times is one of the few papers in the world that gets most of its income from subscription and newsstand sales rather than advertising.) Global Times International Forum Editor Wang Wen told PolOff the English-language edition would maintain the basic thrust of the Chinese-language version, though he rejected any characterization of the paper

as "nationalistic." The Global Times English-language edition would also put emphasis on its editorials, which Wang promised would be more outspoken than those found in China Daily.

FOUR OUT OF FIVE CHINESE SURVEYED PREFER STRONG NAVY

¶4. (SBU) The inaugural edition of the English-language Global Times certainly lived up to Wang's claims. A front-page story announced the results of a Global Times "online poll" that found "81.7 percent" of respondents wanted China to build a "blue-water navy." Meanwhile, a page 8 op-ed, consistent with the line of the Chinese-language edition, denounced the Western media en masse for reporting allegations of Chinese espionage: "...this coverage is simply to create an anti-China bias to legitimize the Cold War-era thinking the Western media still employs."

GLOBAL TIMES DOES NOT SPEAK FOR PARTY

¶5. (C) Yin Shuguang, Associate Senior Editor and Deputy Director for Foreign Affairs at the People's Daily, stressed to PolOff that foreigners should not view the content of the Global Times as "official," even though it was published by the Party's primary mouthpiece. While the People's Daily directly reflected the views of the CCP Central Committee, Yin said, the Global Times in contrast was free from

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such political constraints. Yin, who preferred the word "patriotic" to describe the Global Times' editorial slant, promised that the English-language Global Times would provide more and better coverage of domestic news, including more "critical" (pi ping xing) editorials on issues like corruption. Such criticism of China was rarely seen in the China Daily, Yin observed, adding that to build a credible paper "you must report the good along with the bad."

¶6. (C) Note: Though only in its infancy, the English-language Global Times had already received a warning about too much negative news, according to Global Times editor Wang Wen. A March 31 prototype, which had a press run of just one thousand copies for internal distribution, contained a story about an ex-soldier jailed for filing a petition, a report about corrupt officials sending ill-gotten gains to family members abroad, and a feature on the book "China is Unhappy" (Zhongguo Bu Gaoxing). Immediately after the prototype was released, minders from the Party Propaganda Department told the Global Times to tone it down, Wang said. Wang admitted that the editors had used the trial version to push the envelope to see what would be permissible.

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